

49. (New) The interface of claim 33 wherein the encapsulant and support material have a combined thickness encapsulating beyond one end of the individual lengths of the plurality of fibers.

50. (New) The interface of claim 33 wherein the encapsulant and support material have a combined thickness encapsulating at least approximately 85% of the individual lengths of the plurality of fibers.

REMARKS

Claims 32-50 are pending in the application with claims 49 and 50 added herein.

Claims 32, 33, 35, and 46-48 stand rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by amended U.S. Application 09/103,416 (Pinter). Claims 34, 36, 42, 43, and 45 also stand rejected as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) by Pinter or obvious over Pinter. Claims 37-41 and 44 further stand rejected as being unpatentable over Pinter. Applicants request reconsideration.

The filing date for Pinter is June 24, 1998. The present application relies upon Provisional Patent Application No. 60/090,406 also filed on June 24, 1998. Accordingly, the filing date of Pinter does not precede the priority date of the present application. Further, Pinter is not a printed publication and does not constitute public use or sale in this country, thus rejection under 102(b) is not proper. Page 2 of the Office Action states that the preamble of the Jepson claims in Pinter allegedly constitute what is conventional or known. However, the Office cannot ascribe any date to the alleged admission that